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of representing a free people, in the manner I have so many years enjoyed it, as the highest I could obtain; I never desire it on other terms. I will not urge any man to give me a vote that does not proceed from his heart. Look back at my conduct and see how you have been served; see whether I have not been forward to promote every advantage that the nation has received since I have been your Representative. The freeing her Constitution from the dependence in which it was so long held—shortening the duration of Parliaments, which is a proper check on the conduct of the Representative—extending the freedom of Trade, and encouraging the Linen in every branch: in short, every thing that was done or attempted for the advantage of this country had my warmest support. However, if you are of opinion, that you can be better served by any other man, avail yourselves of your privilege, and elect him; far be it from me to wish the Freedom of Election should be cramped. I shall neither be jealous of his situation nor accuse you of ingratitude; but if inclination, gratitude, or public spirit should induce you to place your confidence again in me, long experience may have convinced you that you will not be deceived.

"I have now made known my sentiments and the ground on which I proceed; nothing remains for me but to wait with respectful submission for your determination; these are the only means by which I shall attempt your favour. Be assured it shall never be laid to my charge, that I have corrupted the morals of the county, by using any of the arts too frequent at Elections. If I can do the county service, my ambition is gratified; I am not the man to injure it for any consideration whatever. Let my situation in life be what it may, I shall ever remain a steady friend to my country, and never forfeit the character of an honest, uncorrupt man, which I thank God I have firmly established.

"I am Gentlemen, with every sentiment of duty and respect, Your very faithful and obedient humble servant,

"W. BROWNLOW."

Dublin, April 17, 1790.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

HISTORY OF TYTHES.

AMONG the great variety of subjects that have occupied the columns of the Belfast News-papers for the last year, few have been more conspicuous than Tithes. The public have seen many publications complaining of the system as injurious to agriculture, and oppressive to that numerous and useful body of men, the land-holders; and an equal number at least contending for the propriety and continuance of the Tithe laws as they now stand.

The subject was introduced by a complaint from the grand Jury of Armagh against the exorbitant exactions of some clergymen in that county; the reply of the clergy and most of the subsequent publications seem to have treated it with too much asperity to produce conviction on the minds of the parties, and the contest was maintained more with the appearance of indulging in reflections, than with a view to remove prejudices, and place the subject in a clear point of view.

If we consider the great length of time that Tithes have been established as a legal mode of support for the clergy, and that the certainty of their continuance must have operated as a strong inducement to many of them to qualify themselves for the office, and relinquish every other prospect of maintenance that might have been open to them, we shall not be much surprized at their being alarmed at any proposal for abolishing or altering them; it is natural for a man to be tenacious of what he conceives to be his property, and cautious of countenancing any thing that he imagines may have a tendency to injure it.

These considerations ought to incline every moderate man to make great allowances for the objections of the clergy to a commutation or other alteration proposed to be made in the Tithe laws. They have a legal claim to Tithes. They have been long in their possession, and until they are satisfied that the alteration will not be a loss to them, they are at least entitled to the liberty of stating their objections.

Complaints have been made, and probably on good grounds, that some clergymen are rigorous and exorbitant in the exaction of their demands, and that their conduct has a certain tendency to sour the minds of the people against them, and even make them dissatisfied with the government that countenances them, but these complaints, it must be acknowledged, attach only to a small part of the clerical body in this province at least, and ought not to be applied to the whole, since it must be admitted that the generality of them do not receive nor even demand the tenth of the produce which the law would actually permit them to take, and which in England, I am informed, is in many districts strictly demanded, not only for corn, but for milk, pigs, eggs, poultry and other smaller matters, which in this country we know nothing of.

Having made these prefatory observations, I will proceed to consider the subject of Tithe as to its origin, continuance, and effects, both in former and present times. The first legal or national establishment of Tithes that we read of, was under the Jewish dispensation, and appears to have been an equitable institution: the tribe of Levi having been appointed for the exercise of religious functions only, were debarred from their share of the lands divided amongst the other tribes, that they might not be incumbered with secular concerns, and the tenth of the whole allotted them as a compensation for it. The officiating Priests received only one tenth of that Tithe, and another portion of it was appropriated to the relief of the poor, the widow, and orphan. This establishment, however, appears to have ended with the Jewish theocracy; for, at the commencement of the Christian era, and for several centuries afterwards, there is not a trace of Tithes existing in the Christian church, nor was it introduced until the professors of Christianity in general, and the ministers of it in particular were corrupted by the love of power, and of money, when by the accession of Constantine, it became the established religion of the state: yet even then, and for some centuries afterwards, one fourth part of the Tithe only was claimed by the officiating clergy, as appears by the writings of several historians.

Blackstone in his commentaries vol. 1. page 384, says, "At the first establishment of parochial clergy, the tithes of the parish were distributed in a four-fold division, one for the use of the Bishop, another for maintaining the fabrick of the church, a third for the poor, and a fourth to provide for the incumbent. When the sees of the Bishops became otherwise amply endowed, the Bishops were prohibited from demanding their usual share of the Tithes, and the division was into three parts only." In process of time, when superstition had extended its influence even over the minds of Kings, the priests had the address to prevail on them to direct their subjects to pay the whole of the Tithe into their hands, and to induce the people to comply with the demand more readily, they invented many ridiculous stories, one of which is related to have issued from a synod held at Frankfort in the year 794, in a capitulary, which asserts, "that in the last famine the ears of corn were found to contain no seed, the infernal spirits having devoured it all, and that those spirits were heard to reproach the people with not having paid Tithe."

It would tire the patience of the reader, and exceed the limits of a Magazine, were I to transcribe all the instances which history furnishes us with, of the deceptions practised on the people by the priests of former superstitious times to secure to themselves the exclusive possession of Tithes, yet I cannot resist the inclination to give one quotation from Selden's History of Tithes, page 169, as another singular instance of it.

"In the reign of Henry VI. in the 15th century, a penitential was made for the use and direction of priests in their auricular confessions as follows. "Hast thou truly paid thy tithings and offerings to holy church? Thou art to understand that at the beginning of the world, Adam was directed to give to God the tenth part of every thing: God bade him to teach his children to do the same.

Adam had two sons, Cain and Abel. Abel tithed truly, and of the best: Cain tithed falsely and of the worst. At last the false tither Cain slew his brother, because Abel blamed Cain, and said he tithed falsely, wherefore God cursed Cain and all the Earth: so you now see that false Tithing was the cause of the first manslaughter that ever was, and it was the cause why God cursed the Earth."

In this manner, in times of superstition and priest-craft, the doctrine of Tithes was preached up, and by this means they were introduced into these countries, and became a law, and passing from the reign of one King to the government of another, they obtained their present footing.

Now if we look into the origin of tithes, and the manner in which they have been handed down to us, there is not much room to plead for them on the score of antiquity; and since the claim to them on divine right is given up, they stand not on ground too high to exempt them from the inspection of an enlightened age, nor the alterations of a British Legislature. Laws which have been suitable in one age may not be found to answer in another. Change of times often requires a change in the laws. It is not uncommon for a Parliament to repeal an act in one session that had been made by itself in a preceding one.

In an act passed in the reign of Henry the Eighth, enjoining the payment of tithe, it is offered as a reason, "that it seemed just that those who received from the clergy spiritual things, should communicate to them temporal things." Whatever claim to equity this law might have had at a time when the great majority of the people were of the national church, it loses that claim, and cannot be equitably applied to a country where not more than one eighth of the inhabitants are so. Here then is one ground on which it is alledged the legislature ought to take up the subject of tithe, and make some alteration in it that would be more equitable in its operation, and less obnoxious to the people. Its injurious effects on agriculture stand also prominent among the objections raised against it: many eminent men have employed their pens in pointing out the injury: The celebrated Arthur Younge, whose exertions in husbandry are not exceeded by any, and whose practical knowledge of it constitutes him a competent judge of whatever promotes or retards it, makes no scruple in asserting, "that tythes, of all other taxes, are the most obstructive to the progress of tillage." The ingenious Archdeacon Paley, speaking of it, says, "of all institutions which are adverse to cultivation and improvement, none are so obnoxious as that of tithes." And again, "Tithes are a tax, not only upon industry, but upon that industry that feeds mankind: the burden of the tax falls with its chief, if not its whole weight upon tillage, upon that precise mode of cultivation, which it is the business of the state to relieve and remunerate in preference to all others."

Were I to quote all that has been written by men of the first talents and best information, against this tax, it would constitute a volume, whilst it would shew, that dissatisfaction with tithe is not peculiar to the people of this country, nor the discouragements to agriculture, so much complained of, exclusively felt by the landholders of Ireland.

There is yet one consideration which I think ought above all others to have the greatest weight with the wise and moderate among the clergy, in disposing them to desire a change in the tithing system, and that is, the effect that the present mode has on the minds of the people; they know that the very nature and end of their appointment, and for which tithe is allotted them, is the instruction and improvement of mankind in religion and morality—and that to effect this, it is absolutely necessary that the teachers should possess the love and good opinion of those they teach, because, if this is not the case, there is no probability that their instructions, however good, will have their proper weight, and consequently the very end of their appointment will be defeated. It cannot be a wise and judicious mode of support, which gives separate interests to the clergy and their

hearers; a mode which annually brings into view the loss which the landholder sustains by the present establishment, and renews the animosity naturally resulting from his finding the demand encrease in proportion to the encrease of his industry, and the money he has employed in improving his land.

Many of the clergy, from their connections, talents, and education, are, or ought to be respectable, yet this respectability is often lessened, if not destroyed, by the present tything system, which by placing them at variance with the people, casts a shade over their good qualities; besides this, there is something extremely degrading to men of good sense and character, to be made dependant for support on a tax, levied by themselves off the lower classes of the people, all of whom give it with reluctance, and many of whom are scarcely able, by their utmost exertions, to procure a scanty subsistence for their families, and who never fail to execrate that man who wrests from them a portion of their hard earned substance.

These are certainly great objections to the continuance of the present mode of supporting the clergy, and ought to induce them to unite in a solicitation to the legislature, for some alteration that would be more favourable to themselves, and less obnoxious to the people. What is there in tithe that should incline them to prefer it to all other modes of support? Is not £500 a year, well secured by some other establishment, as good as £500 by tithe? and preferable, by being divested of all the evils and inconveniences of the latter?

They have no occasion to be afraid to trust the care of their concerns into the hands of Government and Parliament, who, if they change the mode, are not likely to lessen the means of support.—Surely every good and moderate clergyman ought to rejoice at the prospect of an alteration that would free him from a share of the odium indiscriminately brought on the whole body, by the exorbitant demands, and rigorous exactions of some of their order; and which, by removing the cause of disagreement between them and the people, would open to him the means of obtaining all the love and respect due to his usefulness, and the goodness of his character.

Y.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

IT does not strike me, that your Correspondent P. has explained a passage in Horace's Ode, Lib. 1st. and I must confess myself equally dissatisfied with the meanings contended for by D'Acier and Sanadon. The term *Matres*, may be considered here as including females in the different capacities of mothers and married women. To say *that Wars are hateful* to women merely as mothers can scarcely be considered as the meaning of the passage; to confine it to the other sense is wholly inadmissible. Sanadon too has unwarily enough thrown out a severe sarcasm on the married state by limiting *his sense* of the term *Matres* to young *unmarried women*, and seems pretty strongly to imply a hint, that had the marriage ceremony taken place, their anxiety would have been considerably abated.

The quotation from Virgil appears to me, (with the view I have of the passage) not sufficient to illustrate the meaning of Horace. It seems to confine the detestation of war in some measure to those mothers whose children are not of an advanced age. The image is not at all similar, as those mothers would then only be alluded to who were most likely to be directly molested by the ravages of war. The detestation mentioned by Horace, is a dislike permanent and arising from a consideration of the miseries of such a state of things, and widely different from the sudden impulse of natural feeling expressed by the mother in Virgil. I fully agree with P. in the marked difference that exists between Akenside and Virgil in their application of this maternal impulse: however, that it has been a favourite theme of many poets cannot serve the cause one way or the other, for we ought to remember that these poets have been neither mothers nor married women. We may also recollect, that Homer (an authority